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Senate unit backs Bush after pledge from Ford

Washington Bureau of The Sun

Washington—The Senate Armed Services Committee approved George Bush's nomination to head the Central Intelligence Agency by a 12-to-4 vote yesterday—but only after President Ford pledged not to consider Mr. Bush as a possible vice presidential candidate.

Opposition to Mr. Bush, a former Republican National Committee chairman, had grown since confirmation hearings started Monday, and by Wednesday night the administration feared the nominee might be rejected on an 8-to-8 committee vote.

The objection, voiced by committee Democrats, had been that Mr. Bush's political background made him ill-suited to head an agency intended to be independent and non-partisan in its intelligence assessments for the President and Congress.

Another concern, privately shared by some Republicans, was that the CIA, at a time of

rebuilding and seeking of new public confidence, should not be headed by an official who might stay only for about six months. Mr. Bush had testified he would not seek political office but would not turn down the vice presidential nomination if it came his way.

If he left the CIA post to be replaced by another Republican appointment, and if the Republicans lost the White House, the CIA would face the prospect of having had three directors in little more than a year.

The committee endorsement, following Mr. Ford's pledge, apparently assured Mr. Bush of confirmation by the Senate when it returns in mid-January from its holiday recess.

The new intelligence chief, 51, has been United States representative in Peking for the past year and is a former two-term member of Congress from Texas. He will replace William

E. Colby, dismissed in Mr. Ford's government shakeup November 2, but kept on pending the Bush confirmation.

Senator John C. Stennis (D., Miss.), the Armed Services Committee chairman, read Mr. Ford's last-minute letter in which the President said Mr. Bush had proposed his own elimination from vice presidential consideration.

Mr. Ford had kept the possibility open when he named Mr. Bush to the CIA post.

Yesterday, however, he said: "I will not consider him as my

vice presidential running mate in 1976." That Mr. Bush proposed that course, Mr. Ford observed, "says something of the man."

Senator Frank Church (D., Idaho), chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, who had urged Mr. Bush's rejection, said he still will vote against him but will not lead a "determined fight to block confirmation."

Armed Services Committee members opposing the nominee were Senators Thomas J. McIntyre (D., N.H.), John C. Culver (D., Iowa), Gary Hart (D., Colo.) and Patrick J. Leahy (D., Vt.). Before Mr. Ford's action Mr. Bush might also have lost the votes of Senators Henry M. Jackson (D., Wash.), Stuart Symington (D., Minn.), Sam Nunn (D., Ga.) and Howard W. Cannon (D., Nev.), Capitol sources said.